

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Transmission Line Tower Safety Upgrades—Fall Protection

Project Manager: Multiple

Location: Multiple locations in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install work safety fall protection equipment on its lattice-steel and tubular-steel electrical transmission towers throughout the BPA service territory.

BPA will install a cable safety system—the MSA Latchways system— on the vertical climbing path of each transmission tower. The cable system will be connected to the tower with a series of brackets approximately every 10 feet and a top and bottom anchor. Once installed, workers will use the system when climbing the tower by attaching their harness to a specialized pulley which allows them to glide along the safety cable as they climb. Installation will require a line truck and two-to-three workers in the tower and one-to-two workers on the ground.

These actions will occur on existing towers of transmission lines that cross both BPA fee-owned land and land where BPA possesses an agreed upon easement with the landowner. The towers will be accessed using BPA’s existing access road system and the proposed work will not require ground disturbing activities.

Each project will be reviewed by the BPA NEPA lead to ensure that the activities fall within the range of those described in this Categorical Exclusion prior to initiating work.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Biological Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 14, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Transmission Line Tower Safety Upgrades—Fall Protection

Project Site Description

Existing transmission towers located in BPA's service territory, including Idaho, Oregon, Washington, western Montana and small parts of eastern Montana, California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA Historian and Archeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities do not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require ground disturbing activities.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require plant removal or disturbance. In locations on BPA access roads where protected plant species are known to occur (i.e. Kincaid's lupine), established measures or timing restrictions would be implemented, as appropriate.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require habitat removal or disturbance. Minor, intermittent noise associated with installation activities has the potential for minor temporary disturbance to nearby wildlife species. In locations along BPA access roads where protected wildlife species are known to occur (i.e. Oregon spotted frog, Fender's blue butterfly and Taylor's checkerspot butterfly), established measures or timing restrictions would be implemented, as appropriate.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require ground disturbance or in-water work.		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The proposed activities would not require ground disturbance. In locations along BPA access roads where wetlands occur, established measures or timing restrictions would be implemented, as appropriate.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed activities would not require ground disturbing activities. No groundwater or aquifers would be impacted by the project.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No change in land use would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The brackets and cables would not change the visual character of the facilities.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions may occur while line trucks travel existing access roads.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Minor, intermittent noise associated with upgrade activities would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Maintenance activity would improve safety of linemen along BPA's transmission system.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: For fall protection installation work within a non-BPA-owned transmission line corridor, BPA will coordinate with the underlying land owner.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts
Laura Roberts
Biological Scientist (Environmental)

Date: May 14, 2017